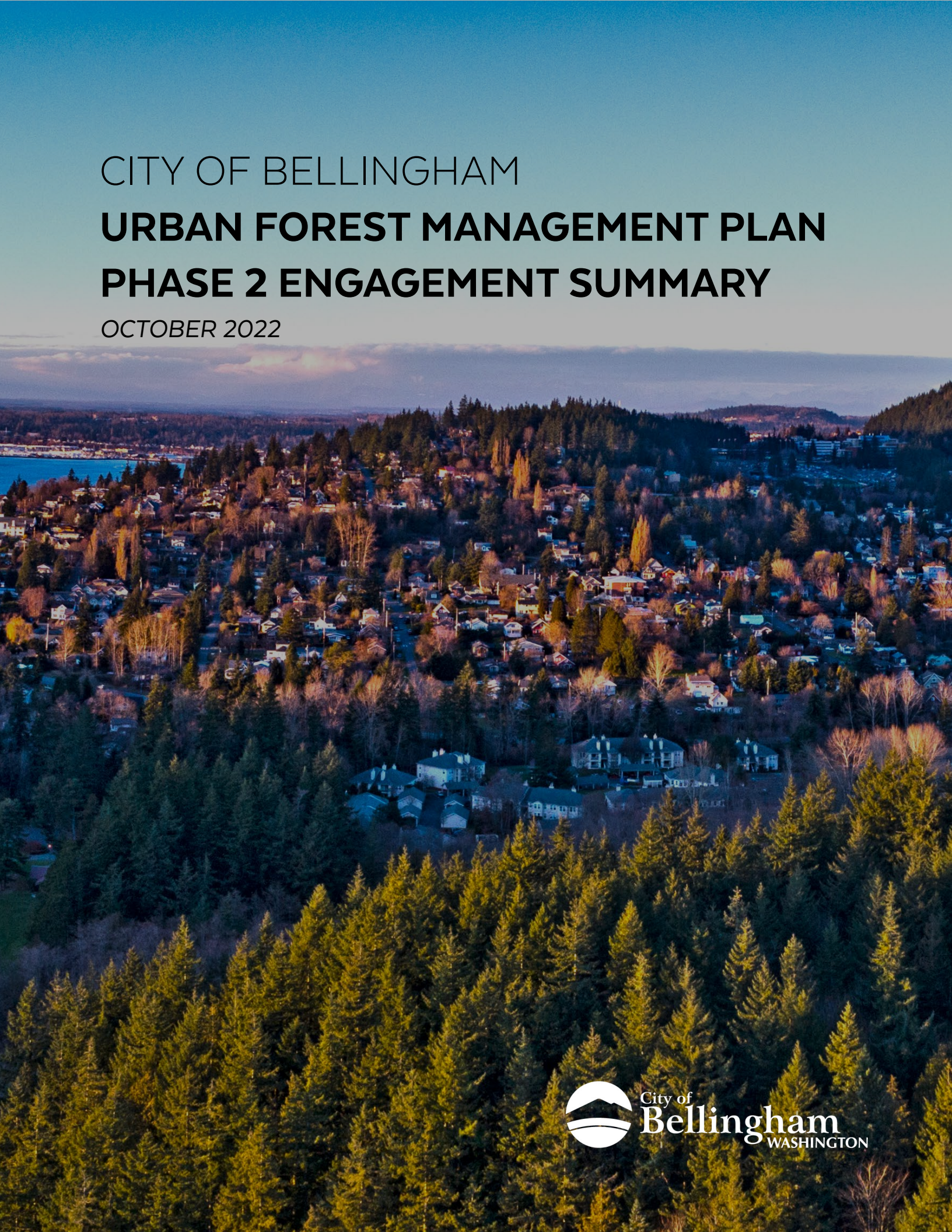


An aerial photograph of a densely forested hillside. In the foreground, there is a thick canopy of evergreen trees. Above this, a residential area with numerous houses is visible, interspersed with deciduous trees. In the background, a body of water (likely a lake or bay) is visible under a clear blue sky.

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

OCTOBER 2022

Executive Summary

The City of Bellingham is creating its first Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP). The plan will provide baseline information on the current state of the urban forest and establish a long-term vision and shared community values for the management of Bellingham's urban forest. The plan will also identify goals, strategies, and actions to reach the long-term vision. This engagement summary presents the findings from community engagement that took place in the spring of 2022 for the project's Phase 2: Community Values.

The project team developed an Engagement Plan that outlined the activities proposed to gather community input. The team completed an equitable engagement review of the Engagement Plan to make the process more equitable and improve representation of all affected communities, including protected classes, vulnerable populations, and typically under-represented and marginalized communities.

The engagement opportunities provided in the spring of 2022 included (with equitable engagement considerations highlighted in green):

- » General public:
 - » Information (1,868 unique visitors)
 - » Online tools (all translated to Spanish):
 - » Survey (690 respondents)
 - » Show us on the map tool (36 online participants)
 - » Your stories tool (8 participants)

- » Events:
 - » In-person open house (22 attendees; Spanish and ASL interpretation provided)
 - » Virtual open house (26 attendees; live Spanish interpretation and English captioning provided)
- » Targeted technical community:
 - » Technical workshops (11 attendees)
- » Targeted equitable engagement:
 - » A focused listening session and booths at two community events (93 visitors)
 - » Two Comment stations (2 locations)

Findings from the community engagement were summarized based on how they will be used for input in the drafting of the UFMP. The tables below provide a high-level overview of what our project team heard and how the feedback will be used to draft the plan.

Urban forest vision:

What we heard	How it will be considered
» The most valued benefits provided by the urban forest are ecological, climate mitigation and adaptation, and health benefits » Respondents and participants envision Bellingham’s future urban forest to have more trees, especially in low-income, vulnerable, and racially diverse areas, to have tree species that are resilient to climate change, to preserve existing trees, and manage water resources with tree protection and planting » Mapping tool participants: » Value forested parks and streets that provide habitat for wildlife, ecosystem services (particularly for recreation), mature trees and reforested or restored areas » Want well-maintained and safe trees and forests that are better protected on public and private land	The project team will incorporate this input when drafting the UFMP vision and goals

Planning the urban forest:

What we heard	How it will be considered
Survey respondents and online open house attendees would like to increase canopy cover above 40%	It will inform the UFMP city-wide canopy cover target
Survey respondents' highest community priorities are affordable housing and climate resiliency, followed by the urban forest	Recommended actions will prioritize investments in the urban forest that reflect its importance to engagement participants and maximizes climate resiliency, while seeking to reduce impacts on housing affordability. Survey responses and resulting recommended actions will be reviewed by elected officials and can inform future decisions.
Some participants felt that the forest and wildlife corridor analysis did not capture the smaller scale ecological systems such as riparian habitat and lacked accuracy in forest structure.	The project team reviewed methodologies and did not identify any errors. Project team confirmed methodology was appropriate for a consistent analysis across the large City-wide project area. The project team will: » Update UFMP reporting to provide more information about and clarify the limitations of the analysis. » Take the feedback provided into account to make recommendations in the UFMP about methodology for future data analysis

Growing the urban forest:

What we heard	How it will be considered
There is a desire for updating the species presented in the City’s list of street trees to expand options and prioritize native and climate adapted species. Plant first where they most improve equity and reduce vulnerability and along streets with new development. For street tree species selection: » There is a preference for streets with large-sized trees of mixed spacing and species » Street trees species should be selected to maximize their ecological benefits and resiliency to climate change Generally, tree species planted in the city should prioritize native species, shade trees, and trees that provide food	This feedback will inform a UFMP recommendation to update the City’s tree planting list with particular attention to native and climate adapted species and recommendations for public tree planting. The feedback will also inform UFMP recommendations about street tree development requirements.
Some participants highlighted the importance of considering view corridors in the growth and management of the urban forest.	The draft UFMP will integrate this community value in its recommendations for the growth of Bellingham’s urban forest.
Some participants would like the City to facilitate private residents planting trees in the right-of-way.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to support community members in planting trees on the public right-of-way while retaining controls that are important for the City to manage its urban forest

Managing the urban forest:

What we heard	How it will be considered
Respondents are least satisfied with current level of tree protection during development and public education. Event participants would like to see more follow up on developer tree maintenance, such as requiring watering of new trees.	The draft UFMP will make recommendations to improve tree protection and maintenance during and after development and public education.
Many locations in the city were identified as needing maintenance or new tree planting, particularly in City Center, Cordata, and Sunnyland.	The draft UFMP review the location information to inform recommendations and priorities for implementation. Areas identified for maintenance will be reviewed by relevant City divisions.
Most survey respondents are willing to pay a small annual fee per householder for the City to deliver urban forest management services to their satisfaction.	The draft UFMP will provide information about the cost implications of its recommended actions to Council and community members.

Protecting the urban forest:

What we heard	How it will be considered
Events participants and survey respondents are concerned with tree loss and the decline of the western red cedar.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to improve tree protection and considerations for the protection of important native tree species like western red cedar that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
On public land, online open house attendees would like to prioritize the protection of existing trees, including along trails and pockets of old growth forest.	The draft UFMP will integrate priorities for public land urban forest management in its recommendations and their prioritization for the implementation plan.
On private land, engagement participants would like new or stronger regulations and enforcement to protect significant and heritage trees and prevent clear-cutting associated with new developments, while avoiding disproportionate impacts on vulnerable, marginalized, or under-represented communities.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to improve regulations to improve the protection of trees in alignment with community values.

Partnering to steward the urban forest:

What we heard	How it will be considered
Participants and survey respondents would like to expand existing partnerships, education, and volunteer opportunities around public and private tree planting and maintenance.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to address those community interest and expand partnership, education, and volunteering opportunities.
There are barriers to attending City-run work parties that could be addressed to increase participation, such as improving information sharing and offering more variety in the timing and location of the activities.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to further facilitate participation in City stewardship events.



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Report prepared by:



Dumas & Associates

1 Introduction

The City of Bellingham is currently in the process of creating its first Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP; the plan). The plan will provide baseline information on the current state of the urban forest and establish a long-term vision and shared community values for the management of Bellingham's urban forest. The plan will also identify goals, strategies, and actions to reach the long-term vision.

The project team completed the Assessment phase (Phase 1) of the project in 2021, including a canopy change analysis, forest structure analysis, wildlife corridor analysis, and wildland-urban interface analysis. The Community Values phase (Phase 2) took place in 2022 and focused on community engagement to learn about community values, goals, and objectives for the management of Bellingham's urban forest. Phase 2 engagement followed the UFMP Engagement Plan. The purpose of this report is to summarize the results of the Phase 2 community engagement.

The results summarized in this report will inform creation of an Urban Forestry Management Plan, Phase 3 of the project. The plan will be drafted in between fall 2022 and summer 2023. Phase 3 will include a second opportunity for community feedback on the draft plan to inform draft revisions before it is presented to City Council.

1.1 Purpose of phase 2 engagement

The purpose of Phase 2 engagement was to seek input from community members on shared values to inform the vision, goals, objectives and recommended actions presented in the draft plan.

The public participation goals were set to a level of public participation to ‘inform’, ‘consult’, and ‘involve’ community members, as defined by the International Association of Public Participation. The objectives for community engagement for the Urban Forestry Management Plan are:

- » To inform the public about:
 - » The status of the urban forest
 - » The role of the urban forest in the community including the unique environmental, economic, and social value of Bellingham’s urban forest
 - » The challenges and impacts of urban forest management options, particularly due to ongoing development and climate change
- » To involve the community in developing a long-term urban forest vision that conveys the community’s perspectives on the City’s urban forest
- » To allow feedback from all affected communities, including typically under-represented and marginalized communities (methods intended to achieve this are highlighted in green throughout the report)
- » To consult the community to identify opportunities to preserve and protect, grow, and enhance our urban forest
- » To build community awareness, support, advocacy for our urban forest and the UFMP

2 Equitable engagement review

The forthcoming UFMP is envisioned as a plan that serves the needs of our entire community. Consistent with the UFMP Engagement Plan and as described in Section 1, above, one objective was to improve community engagement to receive feedback from all affected communities, including protected classes, vulnerable populations, and typically under-represented and marginalized communities¹ in the development of a vision, goals, priorities, and recommendations for Bellingham's first UFMP.

The UFMP project team reviewed the proposed engagement process and applied principles of equity internally and with participating City Departments. The purpose of the equitable engagement review was to improve engagement of typically under-represented and marginalized communities and integrate their interests into the forthcoming plan.

To make our engagement process more equitable, the project team:

- » Reviewed accessibility best practices and resources

- » Considered levels of service budgeted for all six concurrent city projects undergoing engagement in spring 2022
- » Identified duplicated dates, site hosts, overlapping outreach areas, topics, and stakeholders
- » Analyzed equitable engagement methods and event design in consideration of:
 - » The broader context of multiple programs underway
 - » Potential accumulative burdens of the invited marginalized communities and vulnerable populations, e.g., unpaid time away from work or family to attend multiple City-events; request for input without compensation for time and/or insight from lived experiences; and added stresses of finding transportation and childcare

¹ The Equitable Engagement Review Process identified interested and affected parties including: protected classes; vulnerable populations; and under-represented and marginalized communities as defined by law (federal and state) and local ordinances; resolutions and commitments; and technical resources, including:

- [Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act](#)
- [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act Of 1964](#) and [Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987](#)
- Washington State Healthy Environment for All ([HEAL](#)) Act
- [Health Disparities Map](#) prepared by Washington Department of Health
- City of Bellingham Resolution 2021-26 [Affirming Racism is a Public Health Crisis](#)
- Ordinance 2019-11-033 forming a [Immigration Advisory Board](#)
- [Bellingham City Council Legacies and Strategic Commitments](#) [Sections 3; 4B1, 2, 3; E, F5, 6]
- American Forests [Tree Equity Score methodology](#) and [map for Bellingham](#)
- Bellingham Phase 1 UFMP Tree Equity Score Dashboard and technical memo describing preliminary findings.

The project team also used email, phone messages, and conversational interviews to review and inform the planning of UFMP engagement activities. The Project Team used a “snowball” method to equitable engagement outreach, expanding an initial contact roster that was compiled at the beginning of Phase 2 through referrals to trusted sources of information including organizations, individuals, and programs.

Based on findings from the equitable engagement review, above, the project team settled on the following approach to improve engagement of protected classes, vulnerable populations, and typically under-represented and marginalized communities:

- » Brief phone messages and conversational interviews with under-represented and marginalized community members, allies, and programs (March 31 to April 30, 2022)²
- » Developing Engage Bellingham UFMP content for an 5th grade reading level³
- » Providing Spanish translation for the Engage Bellingham webpage, captioned animated video, and survey, and instructions in Spanish on how to use the mapping and stories tool⁴
- » Providing Spanish translation of event engagement materials
- » Offering Spanish and American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation at live events
- » Offering Vietnamese, Punjabi and Russian interpretation upon request in event flyers and on the Engage Bellingham webpage
- » Adapting event design and public engagement methods to reduce extractive impact to marginalized communities and vulnerable populations by recommending:
 - » 24-hour online access to engagement tools
 - » American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation and live Spanish translation at events (as possible based on available Phase 2 budget and schedule⁵)

² Brief conversational interviews focused on potential barriers for participation in the UFMP Engagement Plan and ways to: i) minimize these barriers (childcare, transportation, computer access, site and locations), ii) connect with potential hosts for focused listening sessions, translation and interpreting services, and iii) potential UFMP Plan partners for Phase 3 outreach, translation and interpreting services, and ongoing engagement in UFMP implementation of priority goals and strategies. Interviews also expanded the networks for translation and interpreting resources and partners Phases 2 and 3 of the UFMP.

³ The Equitable Engagement target of 5th grade reading level in the educational materials was not fully achieved due to existing Phase 1 terminology and referenced prior work, which was not developed with this target audience in mind.

⁴ Translation and interpreting services for more than two languages and multi-lingual survey development was not achievable in the Phase 2 project schedule timeframe and budget.

⁵ The Urban Forest Management Engagement Plan and equitable engagement strategies for Phases 2 and 3 were finalized and approved for implementation on March 31, 2022.

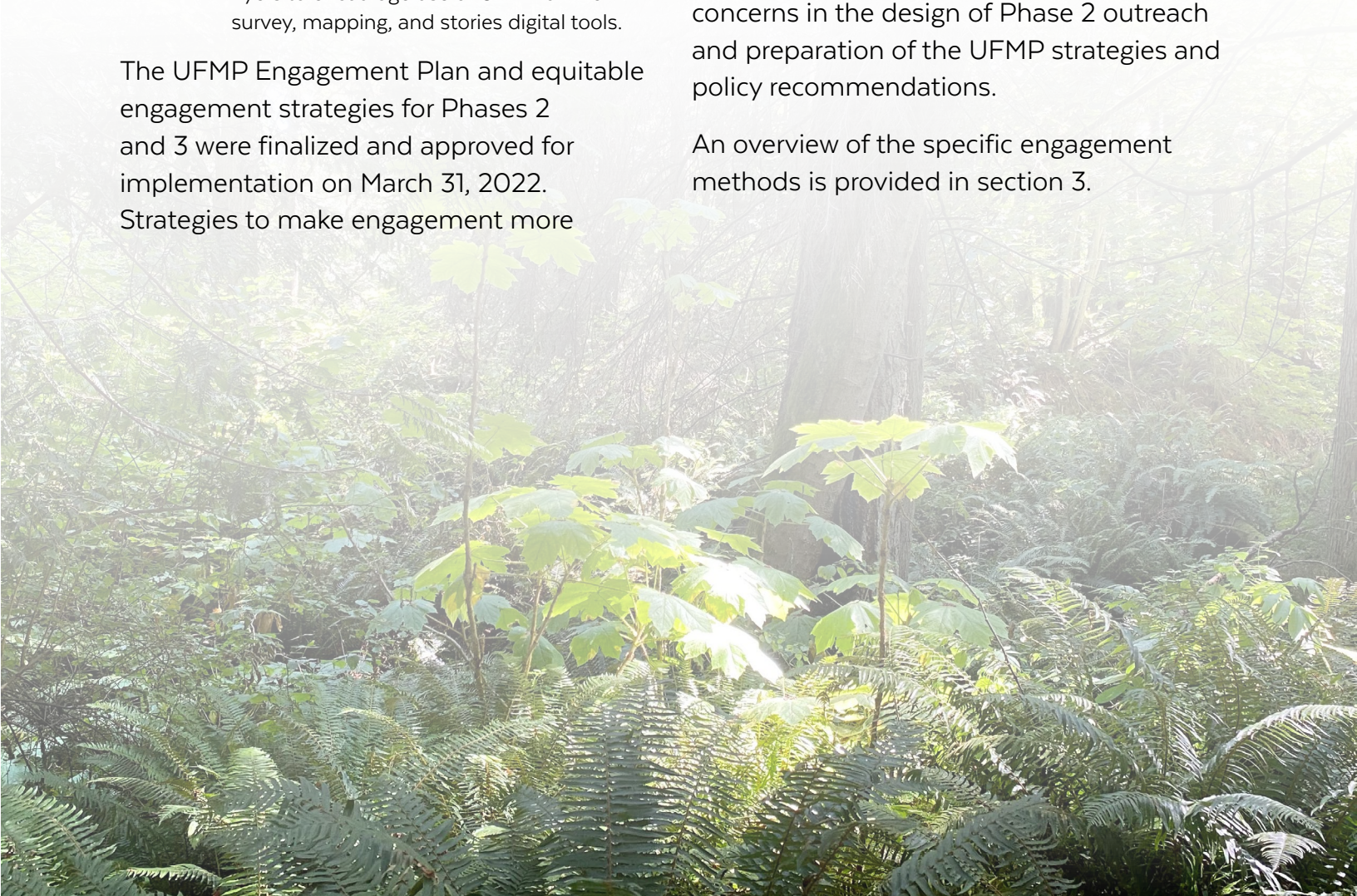
- » Hosting a booth at other public engagement and community events
- » Multiple daytime and evening, in-person and virtual forums to learn about and comment on the UFMP during the six-week comment period (May 9-June 15, 2022)
- » Hosting focused listening sessions sited in accessible community locations in-person.
 - » Note: This approach shifted to alternate input methods in response to changing COVID-19 conditions following distribution of initial invitations. Alternative methods included comment stations at peer locations, posting flyers to encourage use of UFMP online survey, mapping, and stories digital tools.

The UFMP Engagement Plan and equitable engagement strategies for Phases 2 and 3 were finalized and approved for implementation on March 31, 2022. Strategies to make engagement more

equitable and accessible were implemented as possible based on available Phase 2 budget and schedule. The project team integrated new learnings to adjust the engagement approach throughout Phase 2 implementation. Integrating new learnings included responding to rising COVID-19 infection rates, limited rental access, and lessons learned from public health experts seeking to connect with vulnerable and protected communities to inform the design of engagement activities.

This iterative approach promotes a culture of continuous improvement in the City's work of improving equitable engagement and integration of marginalized interests and concerns in the design of Phase 2 outreach and preparation of the UFMP strategies and policy recommendations.

An overview of the specific engagement methods is provided in section 3.



3 Overview of engagement

The City planned two opportunities for community input during the three phases for the development of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (Figure 1). This report summarizes findings from community engagement conducted in Phase 2 – Community Values. Community members will get another opportunity to provide input on the draft Plan during Phase 3 – Plan development.

Engagement opportunities for Phase 2 of the Urban Forestry Management Plan (UFMP) were designed for the general public and technical community. In addition, the project team designed targeted equitable engagement opportunities to improve the representation of protected classes, vulnerable populations, and typically under-represented and marginalized communities.



Figure 1 - UFMP project timeline

3.1 General public

Public engagement included opportunities for the general public to learn about the project and provide input. The public was engaged through:

- » **Project information:** A State of the Urban Forest Report, an animated video (available with Spanish captions) and interactive mapping tool allowed the community to explore key findings presented in the State of the Urban Forest report
- » **Online tools for input:** The project page hosted on Engage Bellingham between May 9 and June 15, 2022, and included an online survey, '*show us on the map*' tool, and '*your stories*' tool. The project page and survey were also available in Spanish.
- » **Events:**
 - » General Public: An in-person open house and a virtual open house were hosted on May 15 and 18, respectively. Spanish translation and ASL interpretation were available.

3.2 Targeted technical workshop

In addition to activities listed in 3.1 above, the project team implemented targeted engagement for technical professionals, organizations and interest groups impacted by or potential partners in urban forest management. Targeted engagement was completed through:

- » Two online technical workshops on May 31 (one afternoon and one evening session).

3.3 Targeted equitable engagement

In addition to activities listed in 3.1 and 3.2 above, the project team implemented targeted equitable engagement along three pathways as defined in the UFMP Engagement Plan and summarized below. The pathways were conducted concurrently with the City of Bellingham UFMP public outreach and engagement activities.

Pathway 1:

Participating City departments identified City-wide accessibility directives and plans related to urban forests and trees. During Phase 3, the project team will review plans and incorporate city-wide directives related to urban forests into the UFMP.

Pathway 2:

Participating City departments reviewed tree equity data assembled for the UFMP and preliminary equity findings from Diamond Head Consulting with an overview of the metrics used to create Bellingham's Tree Equity Score and UFMP. Using this information, participating departments (Planning and Community Development Department, Public Works Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and Fire Department) completed an Equitable Engagement Review Worksheet⁶. Compiled results informed Pathway 3 activities. Equitable Engagement Worksheet responses will also be used in Phase 3 to identify

marginalized areas, equity issues, and further engage marginalized populations in reviewing and providing input on Phase 3 strategies for managing Bellingham's urban forest.

Pathway 3:

The project team conducted 42 outreach calls to: Americans with Disabilities Act and language accessibility (10 calls), youth & families in low canopy areas (12 calls), BIPOC and immigrant families (14 calls), and LGBTQIA+ and allies (6 calls) to inform engagement activities, materials, and promotion.

Based on the results of these outreach calls, the project team hosted 1 focused listening sessions, hosted booths at 2 other community events, and identified trusted partners and potential community organizations to co-host sites for 2 comment stations. An emphasis was placed on promoting engagement and collecting inter-generational input from those communities that are identified and: (i) protected by law (federal Civil Rights Act, and Americans with Disabilities Act; (ii) marginalized and/or vulnerable per Washington State HEAL Act, and City of Bellingham Resolution 2021-26 Affirming Racism is a Public Health Crisis, and Ordinance 2019-11-033 regarding immigrant rights.

⁶The Urban Forestry Management Plan Equitable Engagement Worksheet and review process was adapted from the [American Forests Tree Equity Score](#); [Seattle Racial Equity Toolkit](#); [Risk and Resilience Assessment for Seattle Public Utility](#); [Transforming Community Spaces: A Toolkit for Equitable Collaboration](#); and

Pathway 3 participants provided input through listening sessions and comment stations featuring information and activity boards from the general open house, through surveys (online and paper), and the UFMP web-based mapping and stories tools.

3 . 4 Summary of Engagement Activities

A summary of all engagement activities can be found in Table 1. In addition to providing input through project tools or at events and comment stations, some community members provided input by email or letters to Council and city staff.



Figure 2 - Photos from focused listening session held on May 15.

Table 1 - Phase 2 summary of engagement activities (measures to improve equity and access are highlighted in green)

Date	Engagement Activity	Participants
Online tools		
May 9 – June 15, 2022	Engage Bellingham UFMP page (English and Spanish project pages)	1,868 aware visitors (including 31 visitors on the Spanish page) ⁷ 851 informed visitors ⁸
	Online and paper survey (English and Spanish)	690 total (no Spanish submitted) 678 English electronic 12 English paper
	Show us on the map tool (English and Spanish)	233 locations submitted by 36 participants on the online map and attendees at the in-person open house, technical workshop, and focus listening comment stations
	Your stories tool (English and Spanish)	
Events		
General public and technical events		
May 15, 2022	In-person open house (Spanish and ASL interpretation provided)	22 attendees
May 18, 2022	Virtual open house (live Spanish interpretation and live captioning provided)	26 attendees
May 31, 2022	Technical workshops (afternoon and evening sessions)	11 attendees
Targeted equitable engagement events		
May 16, 2022	Focused listening session – ADA Accessibility, Elders, and Caregivers session at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center	8 visitors

⁷'Aware' visitors have visited the site at least once.

⁸'Informed' visitors viewed a video, visited the FAQ list, visited multiple project pages, and/or contributed to a tool

Date	Engagement Activity	Participants
May 27 - June 15, 2022	Comment station #1 - Bellingham Senior Activity Center Coffee Shop Comment Station	12 surveys taken, 15 flyers taken
June 1, 2022	Event booth #1 -Apartment dwellers and families living in low canopy areas comment pop-up event at the Shuksan Middle School's open house for the Pedestrian Master Plan	31 visitors, 6 English surveys taken, and 15 flyers taken
June 12, 2022	Event booth #2 - BIPOC and immigrants families comment Pop-up event at League of Women Voters BIPOC recognition event	54 visitors, 12 English surveys taken, 4 Spanish surveys taken, and 20 flyers taken
May 25 to June 3, 2022	Comment station #2 - LGBTQIA+ families and allies YWCA comment station	3 English surveys taken, 6 flyers taken

4 Promotion methods

Between March and May of 2022, email, phone messages, and conversational interviews were used to provide:

1. Notification the UFMP process was underway
 2. An invitation to get involved in UFMP Phase 2 engagement activities
 3. Request to forward UFMP engagement information to their contact lists (internal staff and customers)
 4. Request to serve as co-host or trusted location for open house, comment station (one week or more), or pop-up (one-time event) during the six-week comment period (May 9–June 15, 2022)
 5. Request for referrals to others who might be interested in UFMP Phase 2 focus listening sessions and geographic areas of focus
- » City of Bellingham Greenways Advisory Committee
 - » City of Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board
 - » City of Bellingham Transportation Commission
 - » Bellingham and Whatcom County Housing Authorities Board of Commissioners
 - » Sehome Hill Arboretum Board of Governors
 - » Chuckanut Community Forest Park District Commission
 - » Whatcom County Wildlife Advisory Committee

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- » **Press Release** – May 2, 2022
- » **Announcements to boards, commissions, and councils** – May 2 through June 15, 2022:
 - » Mayors Neighborhood Advisory Commission
 - » City of Bellingham Planning Commission
 - » City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- » **Formal notification and invitation to Native American Nations and Tribes** with usual and customary areas in the planning area – May 5, 2022:
 - » Lummi Nation
 - » Nooksack Indian Tribe
 - » Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
 - » Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe
 - » Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
 - » Upper Skagit Indian Tribe
- » **Emails** – May 2, 5, 9 and June 8, 2022:
 - » UFMP email list (120+ individuals)
 - » Downtown Partnership

- » Whatcom County Association of Realtors
- » Whatcom County Building Industry Association
- » Outdoor education organizations
- » Outdoor recreation organizations
- » Environmental organizations
- » Climate action organizations
- » College and university staff and relevant departments
- » MRSC list of Forestry and Arborist Service Providers
- » MRSC list of Maintenance Providers
- » MRSC list of Utility Maintenance Providers
- » City of Bellingham Engage Bellingham Newsletter
- » Whatcom Watersheds Information Network Newsletter
- » Recreation Northwest Newsletter
- » **Social media posts** - May 2 through June 15, 2022:
 - » City of Bellingham Facebook page
 - » Whatcom Watersheds Information Network Facebook page
- » **Posters** in city public parks and neighborhoods with low tree canopy cover (Cordata, Meridian, Birchwood, Central, Sunnyland, and Roosevelt; Figure 3) - May 2 to June 15, 2022
- » **Newsletters and Publications** - May 2 through June 15, 2022:
 - » City of Bellingham Playbook
 - » City of Bellingham Habitat News



» **Targeted equitable engagement outreach:**

- » Focused listening sessions outreach emails, phone messages, site visits – April 31 to June 15, 2022
- » Multi-lingual flyers distributed in Sterling Meadows Apartments, Darby Apartments, Russian Orthodox Church, Vintage Apartments, neighborhood groceries/stores – May 2 to June 15, 2022
- » Announcement at City of Bellingham Immigration Advisory Board meeting – May 17, 2022
- » Emails and printable invites to:
 - » Focused listening session #1 and extended comment station for American with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility held at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center with a targeted focus on accessibility of protected classes and vulnerable populations – email invites May 2 and 9, 2022
 - » Focused listening session # 2 for families with children (preK–grade 12) sent via advisory groups and non-profits – email invite May 26, 2022
 - » Focused listening session # 3 Immigrants and BIPOC families sent via advisory groups and non-profits – email invite May 8, 2022
 - » Focused listening session #4 families of LGBTQIA+ and ally folks sent via non-profits – May 9, 2022

5 Who we heard from

A total of 1,868 unique visitors were made aware⁹ of the project on the Engage Bellingham project page. We heard from 690 respondents in the survey, 36 participants who placed pins on the online mapping tool, and eight who shared a story. Forty-eight people attended the in-person or online public open house and 11 community partners participated to an online technical workshop. At least 108 visitors in total attended one of the four focused listening session. Staff members from the Public Works, Planning, and Fire department also provided input through the Equitable Engagement Review Worksheet. See Table 1 in section 3 for details on the number of participants in each engagement activity.

The information below provides details about the demographics of participants to the survey, mapping tool, and virtual open house. No demographic information was collected for participants to the in-person open house, focused listening sessions, or comment stations.

⁹ **‘Aware’** visitors have visited the Engage Bellingham site at least once.

5.1 Survey respondent demographics

Of the 690 respondents who took the survey, 618 respondents answered at least one demographic question. Of those 618 respondents:

- » 592 respondents (96%) live in Bellingham, distributed throughout all City postal codes.
- » Respondents were a mix of ages with the most common age bracket being 65-74 years old (134 respondents – 22%).
- » 495 respondents (80%) own a home, 116 (19%) rent, and one is living houseless.
- » 362 respondents (59%) reside in postal code 98225. All postal codes were represented by survey respondents; see Figure 4 below for the number of respondents by postal code.

What is your postal code - survey results

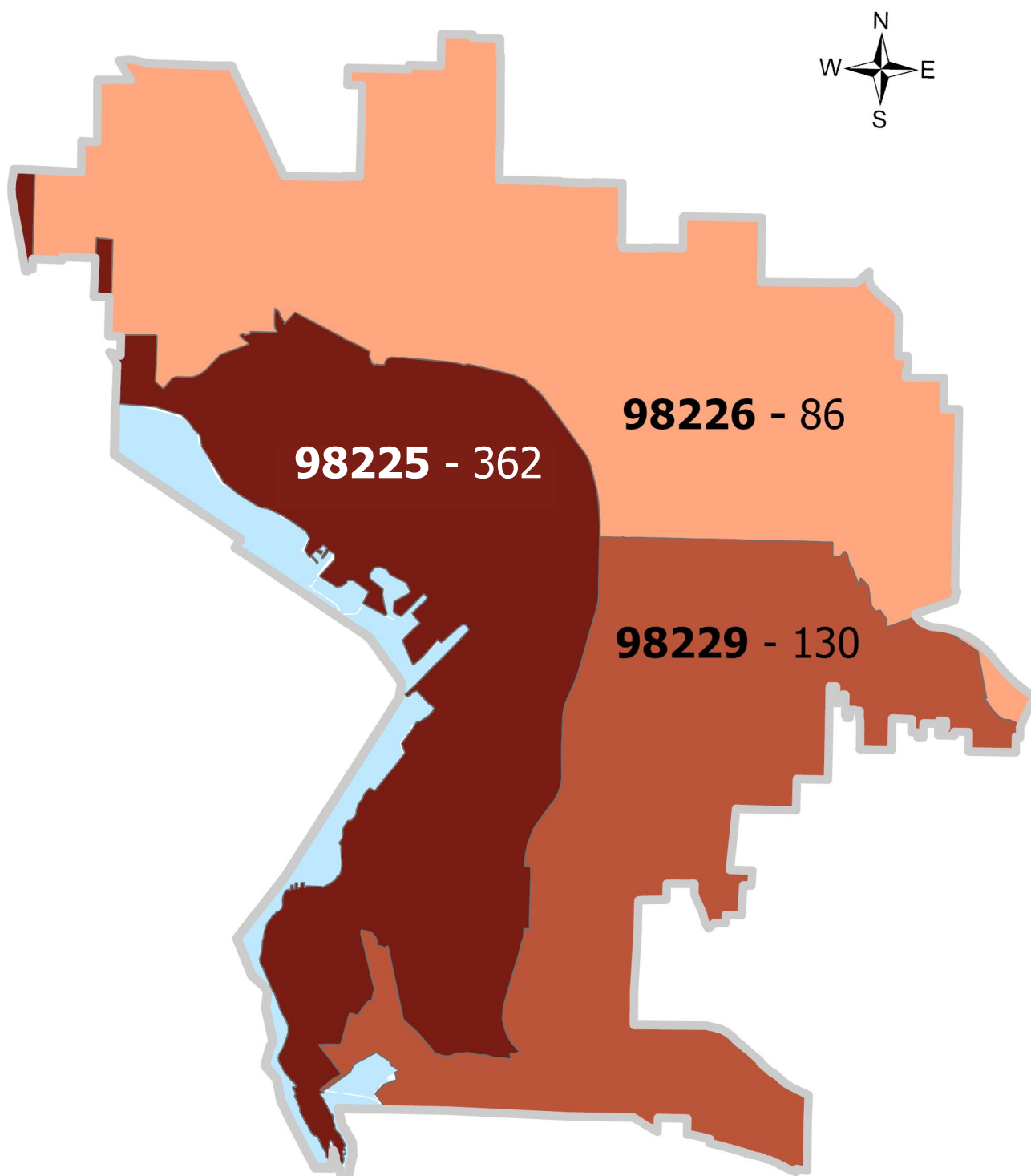


Figure 4 – Number of respondents for survey question: What is your postal code?
596 respondents responded to this question.

5 . 2 Online mapping tool respondent demographics

Of the 36 participants who submitted locations on the mapping tool, 16 participants responded to at least one demographic question. Of those 16 participants:

- » Participants resided in 11 of the 25 neighborhoods in Bellingham, primarily from areas in the South including Edgemoor, Samish, Fairhaven, and South
- » Two respondents living in Birchwood and Sunnyland submitted 88 locations in total (55% of all responses)
- » 10 participants identified their race as white
- » 11 participants own their own home
- » 8 participants identify as female
- » 5 participants reported an income between \$50,000-\$99,000

5 . 3 Virtual open-house demographics

Of the 26 people that attended the virtual open house, 19 attendees responded to the demographic question. Of those 19 participants, 8 respondents (42%) live in North Bellingham followed by six (32%) in South Bellingham.

6 What we heard

Public input for Phase 2 was collected through the online survey, mapping tool, stories tool, online and in-person open houses, focused listening sessions and comment stations, and verbal/emailed comments. The project team also hosted two online technical workshops for professionals, organizations and interest groups impacted by or potential partners in urban forest management.

Key findings from community engagement are organized under the following sections:

- » Vision for the urban forest
- » Five urban forest management themes that the UFMP will explore including:
 - » Planning
 - » Growing
 - » Managing
 - » Protecting
 - » Partnering to steward the urban forest

Each section presents a table highlighting what we heard during Phase 2 engagement and how the feedback received will be addressed in the draft UFMP. Detailed results and additional information can be found in the appendices.

Limitations: While a variety of engagement tactics were used to engage a diverse range of community members, results from the survey and other engagement activities do not represent a statistically significant sample of Bellingham's population. Therefore, the results are only a reflection of those that chose to respond and do not represent all community members.

6.1 Vision for the urban forest

6.1.1 Community values

99% of survey respondents believe trees and forests help make Bellingham a special place. During the pandemic, 61% of survey respondents noted an increase in the importance of forest and trees. Some of the stories shared in the *Your Stories* tool highlighted the attractiveness of trees in Bellingham and the importance of trees during the pandemic.

Daily encounters

When asked if and how they encounter trees in their daily life, nearly all survey respondents indicated they encounter them during visits to parks with trees (93%), where the respondent lives (82%), and when exercising in forests or around trees (82%). Common open-ended responses included encountering trees and forests with habitat value for wildlife (55 mentions), mentions of specific trees planted in yards, neighborhoods, parks, and along streets (32 mentions), and on visits for recreation activities including biking, walking, and hiking among trees (25 mentions).

6.1.2 Urban forest benefits

Survey respondents identified ecological benefits such as clean water and habitat (99% rated as very important or important), climate adaptation benefits such as carbon capture and storage (96% rated as very important or important), and health benefits such as food production and noise reduction (95% rated as very important or important) as the most important urban forest benefits (Figure 5). Climate adaptation benefits to help communities be resilient to extreme heat were highlighted as particularly important for lower income, protected classes, vulnerable populations and marginalized or under-represented communities. Economic benefits such as increased property values and attracting tourism were rated as the least important (47% rated as very important or important).

“More big old trees everywhere (today only 6% are old mature trees)”

– In-person open house participant

“I’d like the urban forest to be diverse enough to handle changes from climate shifts”

– In-person open house participant

6.1.3 Developing a vision

Participants were asked at several engagement events to envision what Bellingham’s urban forest should be like in 50 years. Common themes shared during the open houses and focused listening sessions included a vision for:

- » **More trees and urban forest benefits**
- especially in neighborhoods currently lacking tree canopy and in low-income and racially diverse areas
- » **More equitable access** for all community members to forested areas (proximity, transportation affordability, facilities)
- » Preservation and integration of more **large mature trees**

- » Increased **climate resiliency** achieved with more tree species diversity and better selection
- » **Preservation of existing trees** while accommodating affordable housing and planting more trees in low-canopied areas
- » **Management of water resources** with tree protection and planting

“Prioritize maintenance of existing forests over unaffordable housing developments...”

- In-person open house participant

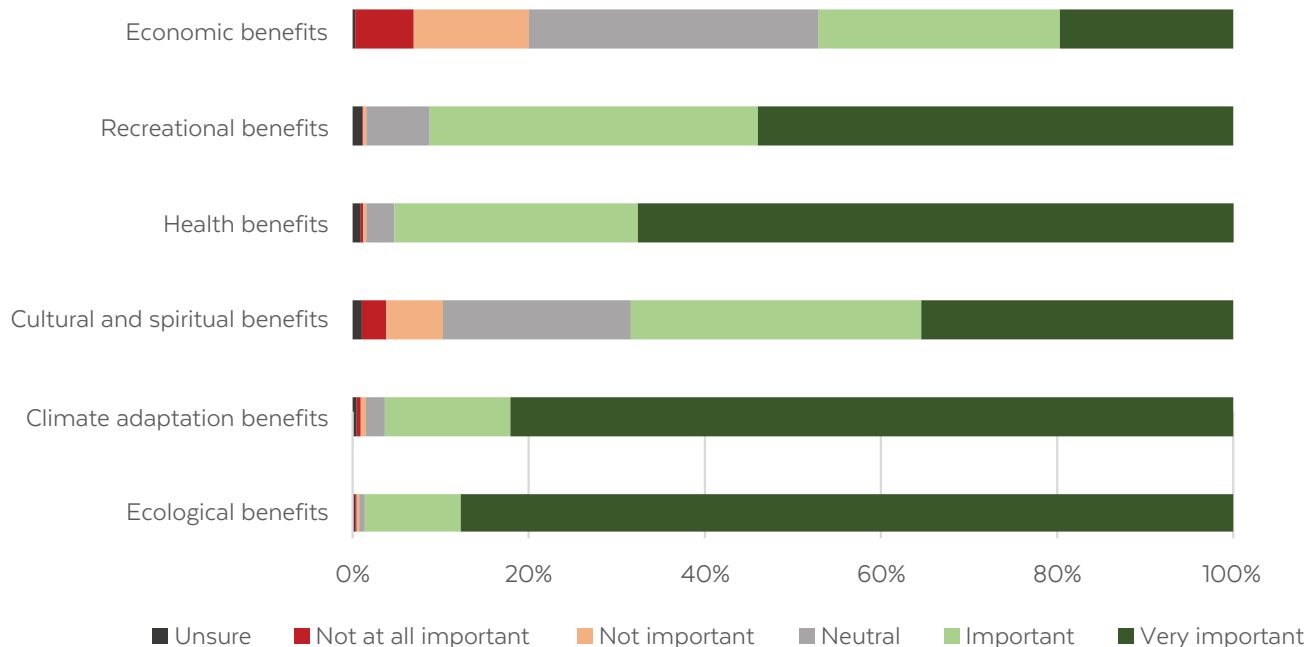


Figure 5 – Survey responses for question 5:
What types of urban forest benefits do you value the most in your community?

6.1.4 Mapping important places

Open house and focus session attendees and online mapping tool respondents were asked to identify places in the urban forest they value and places needing improvement throughout Bellingham. 247 locations were identified in total including 160 from the online mapping tool, 55 from the in-person open house, and 32 from the focus and drop-in sessions. 169 (68%) of these locations were places of value and 78 (32%) were places needing improvement in the urban forest. Three photos were submitted and can be found in Appendix F. Key location findings included:

Places of value

Based on the responses submitted, Sunnyland was the most common neighborhood where places were valued, representing 20% of the total responses (34 locations)¹⁰. 45% of valued places were in a park (76 locations). Valued locations are summarized in Figure 6. Respondents shared locations of trees commonly valued for their specific species (predominantly mature Douglas fir), the value of forest and individual tree protection, habitat for wildlife, ecosystem services, mature and old trees, recreation benefits, and restoration and reforestation.

¹⁰ 33 of the locations were submitted by a one online participant.

PLACES OF VALUE

KEY TOPIC

(number of locations)

- Ecosystem services (water filtration, slope stabilization, etc.) (5)
- Forest/tree protection (21)
- Mature/old trees (9)
- Not Specified (38)
- Other (27)
- Recreation benefits (15)
- Restoration (4)
- Specific tree species (34)
- Wildlife (16)

HOTSPOTS

(density of locations of value)



PARKS

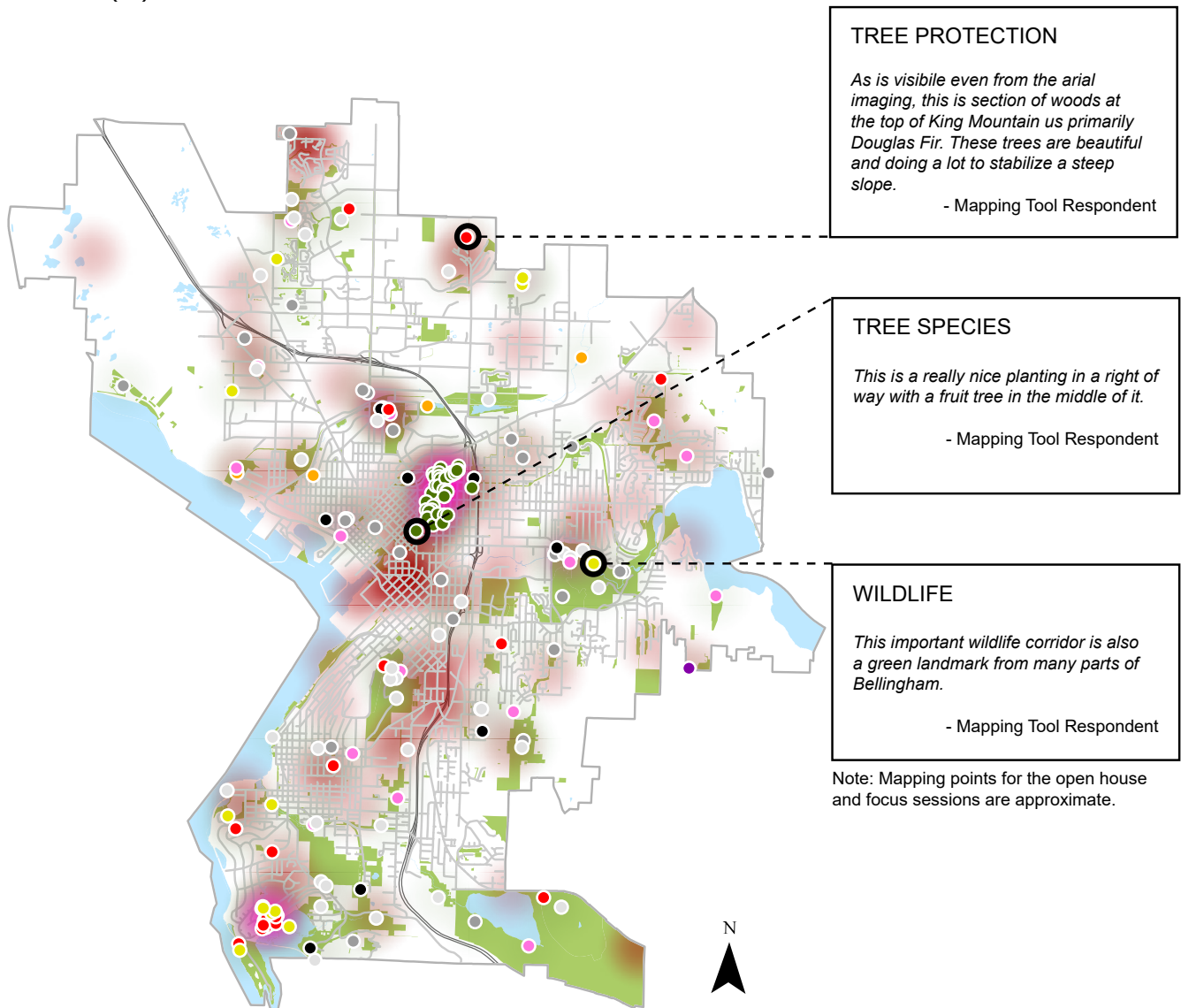


Figure 6 - Urban forest places of value coded by theme identified in the online mapping tool, in-person open house, and focus listening and drop-in sessions.

Places needing improvement

Respondents shared urban forest places needing improvement in Figure 7. Locations were distributed throughout the city with hotspots around City Center (8 locations), Cordata (6 locations), and Sunnyland (6 locations). Only 27% of submissions were in a park (21 locations). Common responses shared locations to plant more trees and increase canopy cover, areas requiring increased maintenance, areas noted for tree hazard and forest safety, spaces where recreation use (i.e., biking, disc golf) has negatively impacted the surrounding forest, and places requiring tree protection or where trees should have been protected, especially from private development.

PLACES NEEDING IMPROVEMENT

KEY TOPIC

(number of locations)

- Improve maintenance (13)
- Not Specified (24)
- Other (12)
- Plant more trees (17)
- Recreation impact (i.e. biking, disc golf) (4)
- Tree hazard and forest safety (4)
- Tree protection (4)

HOTSPOTS

(density of locations needing improvements)

- Sparse
- Dense

PARKS

- Parks

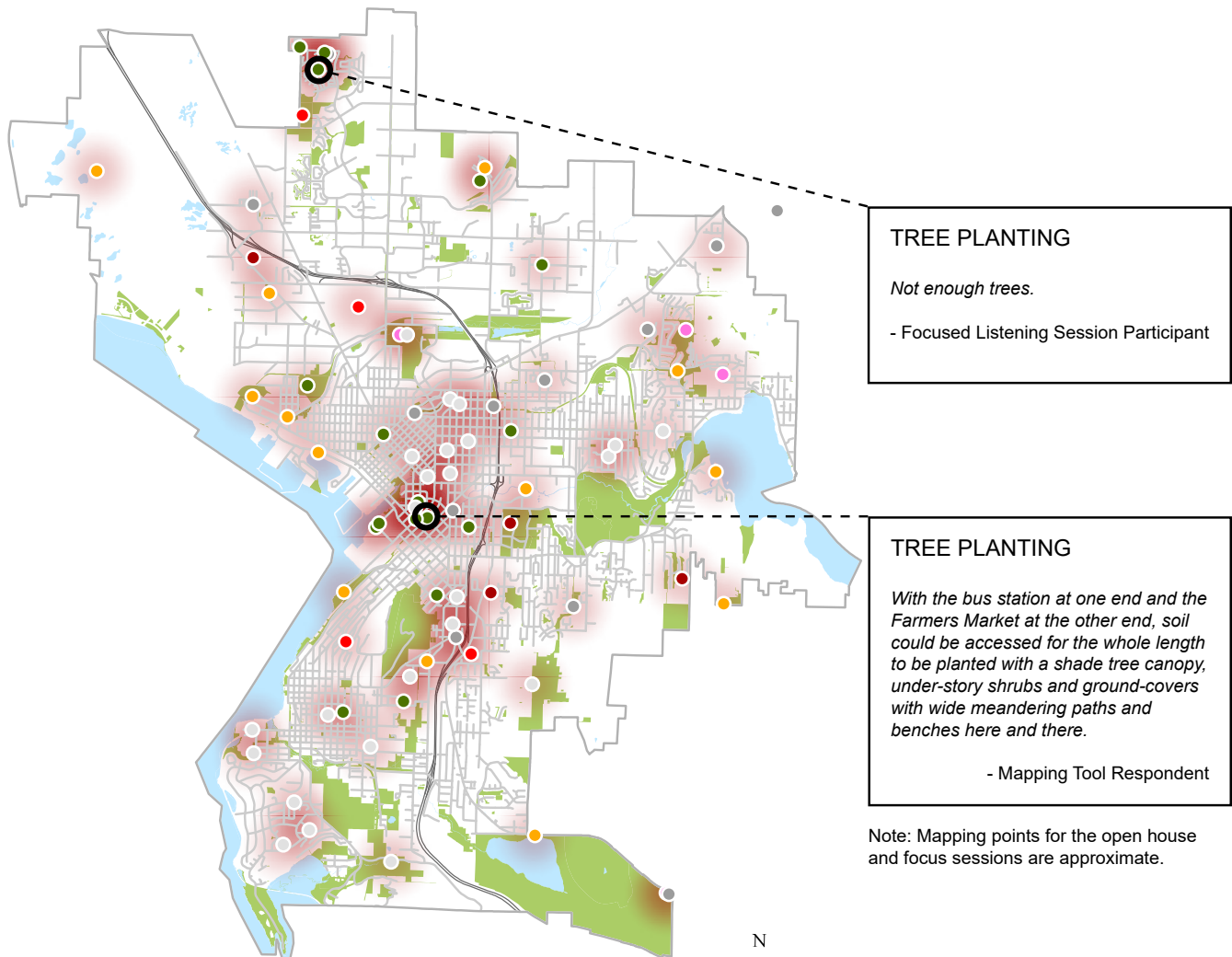


Figure 7 - Urban forest places needing improvement coded by theme, identified in the online mapping tool, in-person open house, and focus listening and drop-in sessions.

Table 2 summarizes the feedback received about Bellingham’s urban forest vision.

Table 2 - Summary of feedback for the urban forest vision

What we heard	How it will be considered
» The most valued benefits provided by the urban forest are ecological, climate mitigation and adaptation, and health benefits » Respondents and participants envision Bellingham’s future urban forest to have more trees, especially in low-income, vulnerable, and racially diverse areas, to have tree species that are resilient to climate change, to preserve existing trees, and manage water resources with tree protection and planting » Mapping tool participants: » Value forested parks and streets that provide habitat for wildlife, ecosystem services (particularly for recreation), mature trees and reforested or restored areas » Want well-maintained and safe trees and forests that are better protected on public and private land	The project team will incorporate this input when drafting the UFMP vision and goals

6.2 Planning the urban forest

6.2.1 Canopy cover target

When asked how they would like Bellingham's canopy cover to change in the future, the majority of survey respondents (80%) and online open house attendees (89%) wanted to increase canopy cover above 40% (Figure 8).

Bellingham's future canopy cover

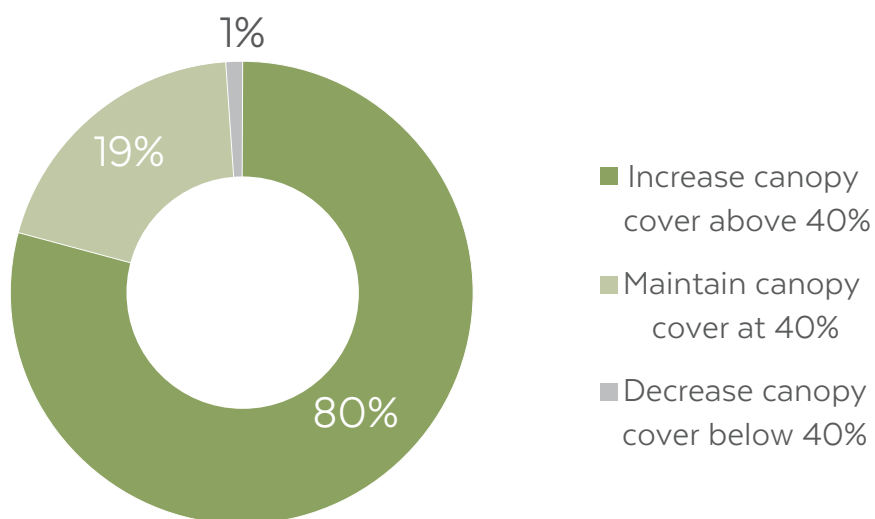


Figure 8 – Responses from survey question 15:
How would you like Bellingham's canopy cover to change in the future?

6.2.2 Competing community values

When asked to prioritize community values in Bellingham, survey respondents ranked their top priorities as being **affordable housing** (71% ranked it in their top three), **climate resilience** (61% ranked it in their top three), and the **urban forest** (58% ranked it in their top three; Figure 9). Survey respondents ranked athletic fields and complexes as the least prioritized community value (only 8% ranked it in their top three), followed by industry and job opportunities (21% ranked it in their top three), and transportation options (37% ranked it in their top three).

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of survey respondents rated the urban forest as ‘**very important**’ when compared to other services the City provides and 89% of online open house attendees consider the urban forest very important in comparison with other City services such as utilities, transportation, safety, and library.

Bellingham’s top community priorities

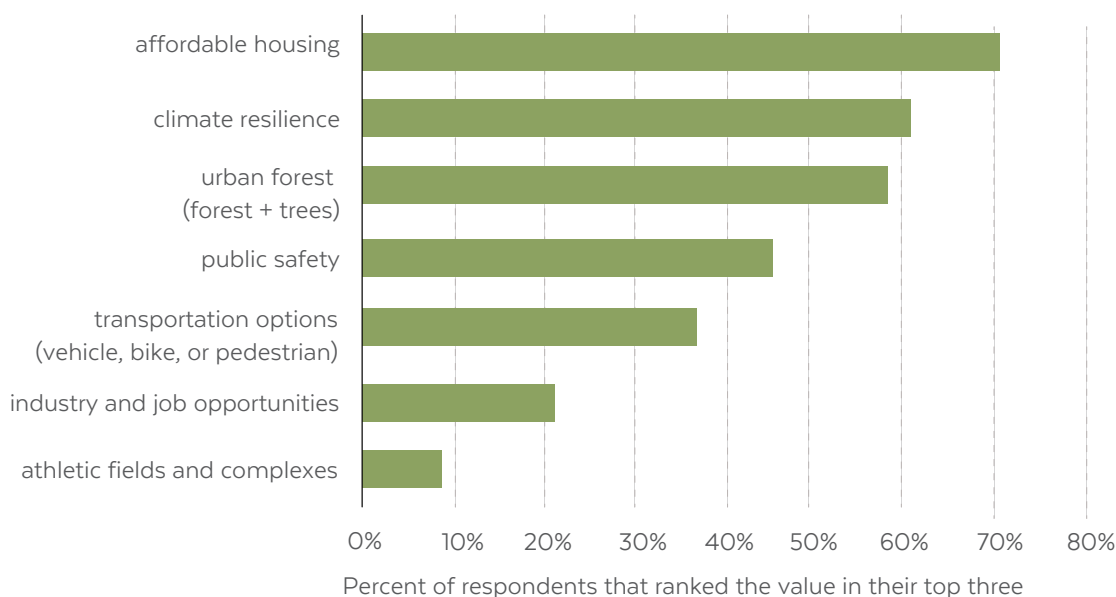


Figure 9 – Responses for survey question 13: How would you prioritize the following community values? Survey respondents could rank each value from 1 (most important) to 7 (least important). This graph shows the percentage of each community value ranked in the top 3 categories. For example, 71% of affordable housing responses were ranked as “1”, “2”, or “3”.

Table 3 summarizes feedback received on the theme of planning for Bellingham’s urban forest.

Table 3 – Summary of feedback for planning the urban forest

What we heard	How it will be considered
Survey respondents and online open house attendees would like to increase canopy cover above 40%.	It will inform the UFMP city-wide canopy cover target.
Survey respondents’ highest community priorities are affordable housing and climate resiliency, followed by the urban forest.	Recommended actions will prioritize investments in the urban forest that reflect its importance to engagement participants and maximizes climate resiliency, while seeking to reduce impacts on housing affordability. Survey responses and resulting recommended actions will be reviewed by elected officials and can inform future decisions.
Some participants felt that the forest and wildlife corridor analysis did not capture the smaller scale ecological systems such as riparian habitat and lacked accuracy in forest structure.	The project team reviewed methodologies and did not identify any errors. Project team confirmed methodology was appropriate for a consistent analysis across the large City-wide project area. The project team will: » Update UFMP reporting to provide more information about and clarify the limitations of the analysis. » Take the feedback provided into account to make recommendations in the UFMP about methodology for future data analysis.

6.3 Growing the urban forest

6.3.1 Priorities for growing the urban forest

Several attendees at the open houses shared a desire for the City to update its tree planting requirements for private residents wanting to plant a tree in the public right-of-way. Attendees noted in that their understanding of real or perceived requirements felt cumbersome and were seen as a barrier to growing the urban forest.

Some community members who attended the open house or shared comments with City staff would like the City to update its list of street trees with particular attention to native tree species. Several open house attendees want the City to incorporate trees in affordable housing projects and to plan for climate change through suitable species selection. Focus listening session participants would like to see more street trees planted in general and view downtown City Center development projects as an opportunity to grow the urban forest. It was suggested that areas with the greatest needs for trees based on vulnerability and equity considerations be prioritized for tree planting.

“Affordability and liveability are both important! Trees will be important to make housing livable”

– Virtual open house participant

6.3.2 View corridors

Three of the eight stories tool respondents shared comments both supporting and disagreeing on a provision protecting view corridors pertaining to trees. The benefits and concerns around views was also mirrored by a handful of mentions shared in the open-ended survey responses on questions respondents wished they were asked (6 respondents) and ideas for improving levels of service on public land. A complete record of the stories shared can be found in Appendix G.

6.3.3 Street tree plantings

Respondents were asked to identify which of the six photos shown below looked like their current street and which photo they would most like their street to look like (Figure 10). 41% of respondents live on a street that looks the most like option F – *mixed spacing and species, large sized trees* followed by 34% for option D – *mixed spacing and species, medium-sized trees*. Only 8% of respondents live on streets that have few or no trees. Overall, respondents prefer to live on streets that most resemble option F – *mixed spacing and species, large-sized trees* (61%). Of those who currently live on a street best resembling option F, the majority (87%) would like to maintain mixed spacing, species, and large-sized trees (option F).

When selecting new street trees, most survey respondents would like the City to

select species for their ecological benefits such as shade (79% ranked it in their top two) followed by their resiliency to pests, diseases, drought, and climate change (75% ranked it in their top two). Focused listening session participants shared a similar desire to select larger-sized tree species, especially shade trees for parks and more native tree species. Trees that provide food (e.g., fruit trees, food forests), were also highly valued in many engagement activities. When asked what questions they wished they were asked and to provide their answer to that

question, many respondents wanted to share more information about their species preference for the planting of more native or food trees. It was also suggested that the City could require street trees for all new development street frontage and plant trees in unimproved rights-of-way to grow canopy cover across the city.



C. Regularly spaced, medium-sized trees



D. Mixed spacing and species, medium-sized trees



E. Regularly spaced, large trees



F. Mixed spacing and species, large-sized trees

Figure 10 – Street types shown in the survey

Table 4 summarizes feedback received on the theme of growing Bellingham’s urban forest.

Table 4 - Summary of feedback for growing the urban forest

What we heard	How it will be considered
There is a desire for updating the species presented in the City’s list of street trees to expand options and prioritize native and climate adapted species. Plant first where they most improve equity and reduce vulnerability and along streets with new development.	This feedback will inform a UFMP recommendation to update the City’s tree planting list with particular attention to native and climate adapted species and recommendations for public tree planting. The feedback will also inform UFMP recommendations about street tree development requirements.
For street tree species selection: » There is a preference for streets with large-sized trees of mixed spacing and species » Street trees species should be selected to maximize their ecological benefits and resiliency to climate change Generally, tree species planted in the city should prioritize native species, shade trees, and trees that provide food	
Some participants highlighted the importance of considering view corridors in the growth and management of the urban forest.	
Some participants would like the City to facilitate private residents planting trees in the right-of-way.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to support community members in planting trees on the public right-of-way while retaining controls that are important for the City to manage its urban forest

6.4 Managing the urban forest

6.4.1 Priorities for managing the urban forest

When asked what management practices they would like the City to prioritize on public land, survey respondents most valued the protection of existing trees (53% ranked as top two) followed by tree planting where space is available on public open space or undeveloped rights-of-way (51% ranked as top two), and tree planting where space is available on streets and in existing parks (46% ranked as top two). Virtual open house attendees also strongly prioritized tree protection (see section 6.5 for more details). Open house and technical workshop attendees were particularly concerned with invasive species management, risk mitigation, and water storage. Attendees also suggested that the City develops standards or trains arborist to make sure that they consider the value of trees and the health of the urban forest when they prune them.

When asked to prioritize management practices on private land, survey respondents most wanted the City to prioritize requiring retention of heritage trees or trees of significance (62% ranked as top two). Virtual open house attendees had the same top priority on private land (33% rated as the first thing they would prioritize). Other top priorities for survey respondents included supporting landowners to plant trees through voluntary stewardship programs (54% ranked as top two) and enforcing tree retention or replacement requirements (53% ranked as top two).

Open house and technical workshop attendees also suggested the City incentivize homeowner tree maintenance and educate the community on responsibilities for tree maintenance, including tree and powerline conflicts, and resources available to the homeowner.

“I would like to see more edible native and non-native trees planted. These could provide food for humans and animals. Such trees as Rowan Berry, Hawthorns, Elderberry, Wild Cherry.”

– Survey respondent

“Could be good to have signs to note different trees so people can appreciate what a certain type of tree brings to the environment.”

– Survey respondent

6.4.2 Levels of service

Survey respondents were mixed when it came to satisfaction with the levels of service provided by the City (Figure 11). Respondents were most dissatisfied with current level of tree protection during development (39% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) and public education (18% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied). Respondents were most satisfied with tree pruning and maintenance (49% were satisfied or very satisfied) followed by tree planting (39% were satisfied or very satisfied), and dangerous tree removal (33% were satisfied or very satisfied). 13% to 31% of respondents were unsure of their satisfaction with the services listed. Event participants would like to see more follow-up by the City on developer tree maintenance after development, particularly for tree watering.

Of the 326 ideas shared for improving the level of service on public land, the top ideas were about species selection especially around planting food-producing trees and native species. Planting more trees and protecting and replacing trees during development were also commonly shared themes.

Many of the locations submitted on the mapping tool and on maps at engagement events highlighted areas where more tree planting or maintenance improvements were required. Many of the locations for improvements were in City Center (8 locations), Cordata (6 locations), and Sunnyland (6 locations; see section 6.1 for more details).

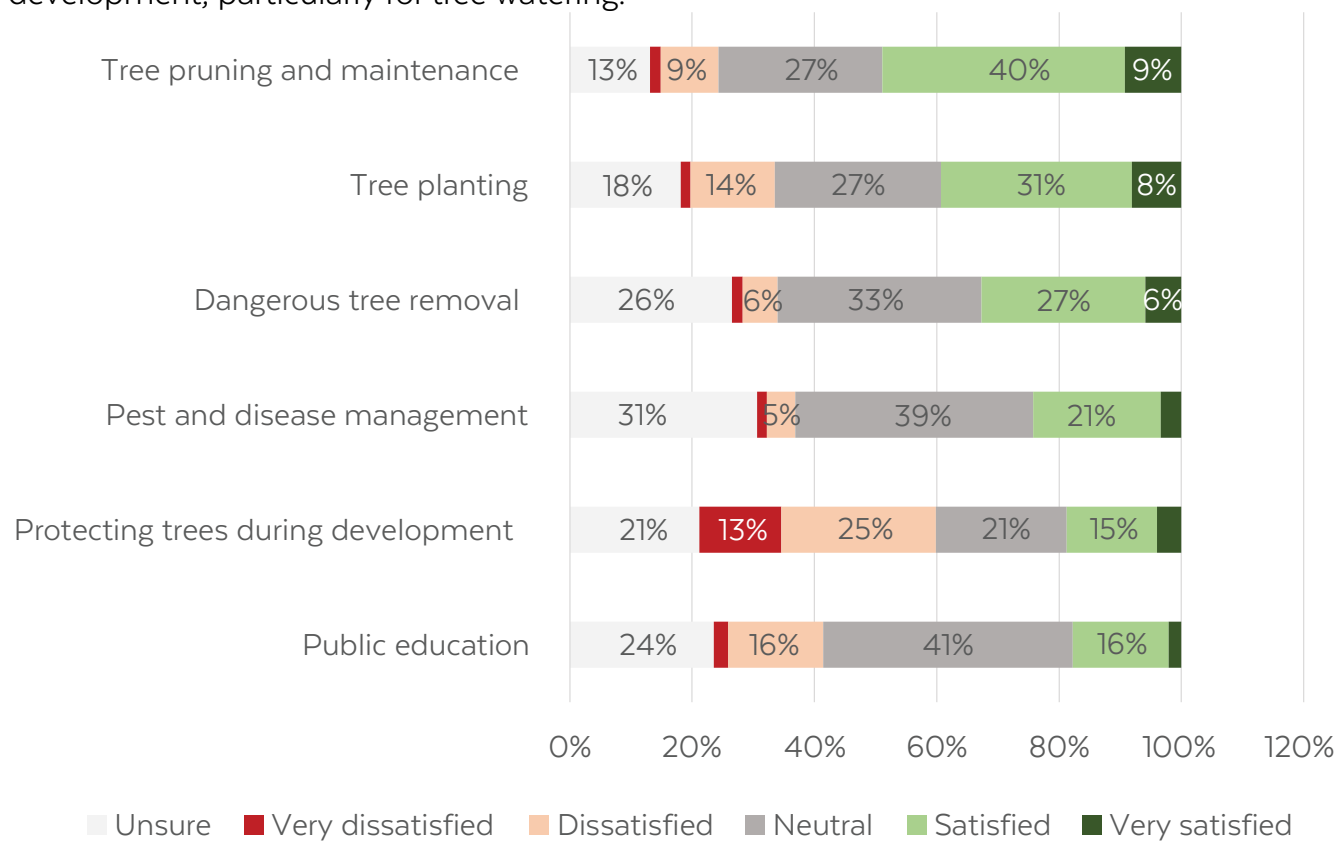


Figure 11 – Survey responses for question 10:

How satisfied are you with the current levels of service provided by the City on public land for...?

6.4.3 Willingness to pay

When asked how much they would be willing to pay for the City to deliver more satisfying levels of service on public land, the majority of survey respondents indicated a preference to pay between \$10-\$100 per year per household (86%), including 48% who are willing to pay \$50 to \$100 per year per household.

Table 5 summarizes feedback received on managing Bellingham's urban forest.

Table 5 - Summary of feedback for managing the urban forest

What we heard	How it will be considered
Respondents are least satisfied with current level of tree protection during development and public education. Event participants would like to see more follow up on developer tree maintenance, such as requiring watering of new trees.	The draft UFMP will make recommendations to improve tree protection and maintenance during and after development and public education.
Many locations in the city were identified as needing maintenance or new tree planting, particularly in City Center, Cordata, and Sunnyland.	The draft UFMP review the location information to inform recommendations and priorities for implementation. Areas identified for maintenance will be reviewed by relevant City divisions.
Most survey respondents are willing to pay a small annual fee per householder for the City to deliver urban forest management services to their satisfaction.	The draft UFMP will provide information about the cost implications of its recommended actions to Council and community members.

6 . 5 Protecting the urban forest

In addition to concerns raised under the previous theme, events participants expressed concern over tree loss in general, decline of western red cedar, and clear-cutting during development. They shared priorities for protecting mature trees across public and private land, increasing regulations and enforcement of tree protection, and establishing a heritage tree program. Several attendees expressed a desire to increase the tree replacement ratio, charge fines for tree removal, and require protective codes for heritage trees.

On public land, focus listening session participants would like to see protection of trails and pockets of old growth forest on public land, address conflict at the neighborhood scale around illegal street tree removal and improve toxic waste removal practices in the Boulevard Park to wharf area.

On private land, focused listening session participants shared support for increased protection of trees on private land in general, especially large trees on private property. They also emphasized the importance of planting the right tree in the right place and retaining trees by requiring tree buffers for new development. They noted evidence of large-scale private tree removal and would like to see increased tree removal enforcement and education for tree care companies. Some of the stories shared on *Your stories* expressed concerns with tree and habitat loss to development. Participants also noted that the impact of changes to regulations on vulnerable, marginalized, and under-represented

communities should be assessed to avoid creating disproportional impacts on those communities and to balance tree protection with affordable housing.

Eleven (58%) online open house attendees would like the City to prioritize protecting existing trees on public land (including regulations and enforcement) when compared with other public land management priorities (Figure 12).

This is consistent with survey respondents who placed the highest priority to protect of existing trees (53% ranked as top two; see section 6.3 for more details.)

When asked what questions respondents wished they were asked and their answer, common themes were more questions around regulation of private trees.

When asked to provide open-ended information to inform development of the Urban Forestry Management Plan, 23 respondents shared a link to a resource with a common mention of the Protect Mud Bay Cliffs project. Other common themes in the responses were about tree and forest removal and the importance of protecting Bellingham's urban forest.

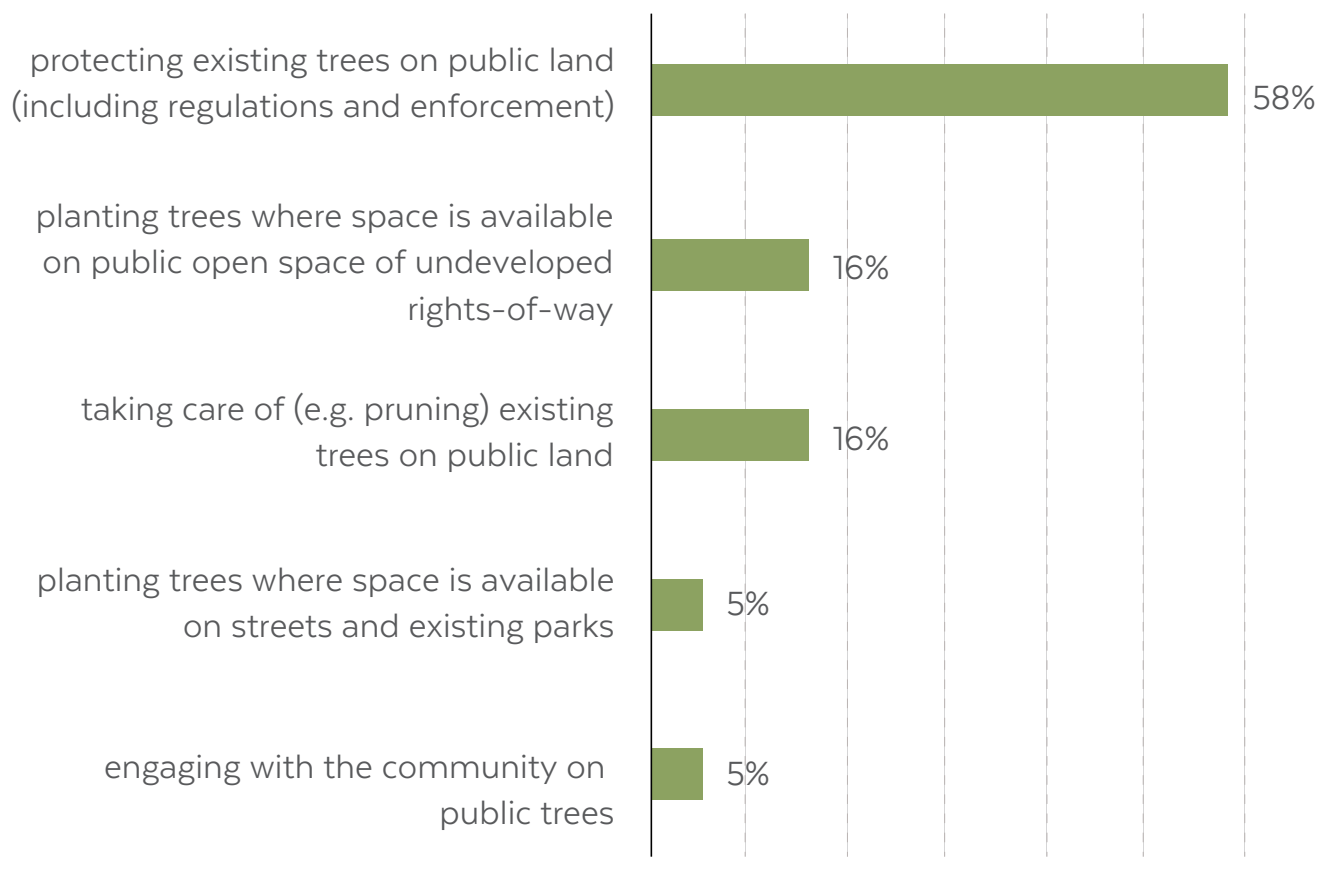


Figure 12 – Online open house responses when asked what is the first thing they would like the City to prioritize on public land.

“We are truly blessed to live in a lush forested part of the world BUT the very thing that attracts people to this area often ends up being the thing that is sacrificed in order to build homes/facilities to accommodate this growth.”

– Comment snippet from story sharer

I wish the survey had asked about tree loss associated with new development in existing forestlands and greenfield sites. I think this is the single greatest threat to our urban forest and to the climate resiliency of our City (last summer’s intense heat drove home the importance of access to shade!).”

– Survey respondent

“Going forward, preserving urban forests on private land will need to be prioritized and may require modifications of the city’s development regulations.”

– Survey respondent

Table 6 summarizes the feedback received about protecting Bellingham’s urban forest.

Table 6 - Summary of feedback for protection the urban forest

What we heard	How it will be considered
Events participants and survey respondents are concerned with tree loss and the decline of the western red cedar.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to improve tree protection and considerations for the protection of important native tree species like western red cedar that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.
On public land, online open house attendees would like to prioritize the protection of existing trees, including along trails and pockets of old growth forest.	The draft UFMP will integrate priorities for public land urban forest management in its recommendations and their prioritization for the implementation plan.
On private land, engagement participants would like new or stronger regulations and enforcement to protect significant and heritage trees and prevent clear-cutting associated with new developments, while avoiding disproportionate impacts on vulnerable, marginalized, or under-represented communities.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to improve regulations to improve the protection of trees in alignment with community values.

6 . 6 Partnering to steward the urban forest

6.6.1 Priorities for partnering to steward the urban forest

Attendees at the open houses and participants at the focused listening session shared a desire to prioritize training and education opportunities for the public including ideas for expanding and increasing partnerships to steward the urban forest through initiatives such as a public stewardship program and partners like schools, local tribes, and neighborhood associations. A few survey respondents shared an idea to engage and educate the community with educational tree signage posted throughout the city on notable trees. Focused listening session participants also wanted additional volunteer opportunities and suggested ideas like an adopt-a-tree program and subsidies for private tree planting.

When asked what questions respondents wished they were asked and their answer, common themes were more questions around stewardship, partnership, and education.

“They always seem to be in the morning on weekends, I’d participate more if there were some after work options on weekdays.”

– Survey respondent

6.6.2 Community stewardship

Forty-five percent (45%) of survey respondents have planted or maintained trees in the city rights-of-way in the last five years. Just over half (53%) of respondents are willing to pay between \$25-50 per household per year to receive training or materials to maintain a street tree on or adjacent to their property and 37% would not be willing to pay.

67% of survey respondents have planted at least one tree on their property in the last five years. 42% of survey respondents have attended a community work party to plant trees, mulch, or remove invasive species in the last five years. Some participants also shared ideas for interesting partnerships and initiatives that the City could pursue with organizations like Whatcom Million Trees Project or the Western Washington University.

6.6.3 Barriers to stewardship

Fifty percent (50%) of survey respondents are prevented from planting or maintaining a tree due to limited space.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of survey respondents have other priorities which prevent them from attending public work parties while 35% don't have information about the work parties. Other common responses for barriers included concern

with time commitment and the pandemic. Providing stewardship opportunities in more varied locations (particularly in under-represented northern or central neighborhoods) could improve access to more community members.

Table 7 summarizes the feedback received about partnering to steward Bellingham's urban forest.

Table 7 - Summary of feedback for partnering to steward the urban forest

What we heard	How it will be considered
Participants and survey respondents would like to expand existing partnerships, education, and volunteer opportunities around public and private tree planting and maintenance.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to address those community interest and expand partnership, education, and volunteering opportunities.
There are barriers to attending City-run work parties that could be addressed to increase participation, such as improving information sharing and offering more variety in the timing and location of the activities.	The draft UFMP will include recommendations to further facilitate participation in City stewardship events.

7 Next steps

The findings from this Phase 2 engagement will be considered along with findings from Phase 1 about the current state of Bellingham's urban forest to inform Phase 3, the drafting of the Urban Forestry Management Plan. Phase 3 of public engagement is expected to occur in the spring of 2023 to gather feedback on the draft Urban Forestry Management Plan.

8 Appendices

Appendix A: In-person open house activity boards

Appendix B: Virtual open house mural board results

Appendix C: Focus group activity boards

Appendix D: Technical workshop online whiteboards

Appendix E: Survey results

Appendix F: Mapping tool results

Appendix G: Stories tool results

Appendix H: Online open house poll

Appendix I: Lessons learned